

No Expressway Alliance newsletter no 10

A coalition of individuals and groups opposed to all suggested corridors and routes for an Expressway between Cambridge and Oxford formally launched on 14TH September 2018 in Botley, Oxford.

Our member groups continue to expand:

Member groups: Buckinghamshire Expressway Action Group, Bullingdon Community Association (Oxford), Cambridge Friends of the Earth, Charlton on Otmoor Parish Council, Charndon Parish Council, Cowley Area Transport Group, Cumnor Parish Council, Extinction Rebellion Oxford, Fossil Free Oxfordshire, Friends of Lye Valley, Friends of Raleigh Park, Greenpeace UK, No Expressway Group (formerly known as: Horton cum Studley Expressway Group), Horton cum Studley Parish Council, Kidlington Parish Council, Low Carbon Oxford North, Low Carbon West Oxford, Need Not Greed Coalition – **(35 member groups)**, North Hinksey Parish Council, North Otmoor No Expressway Group, Oxford Bioregion Forum, Oxford Climate Lobby, Oxford Friends of the Earth, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, Radley Parish Council, Reading Friends of the Earth, Rethink Oxfordshire’s Economic Growth Plan, Sandford on Thames Parish Council, South Oxfordshire Sustainability, Sunningwell Parishioners Against Damage to the Environment (SPADE)**(13 associated groups)**, Wendlebury Parish Council, Weston on the Green Parish Council, Westway Community Concern, Yarnton Parish Council.

HAS YOUR GROUP JOINED AND FILLED IN A FORM YET? IF NOT, SEE HOW TO JOIN using the membership form attached with this newsletter

VACANCIES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN THE NO EXPRESSWAY ALLIANCE:

VOLUNTEER JOBS AT THE NO EXPRESSWAY ALLIANCE

The No Expressway Alliance needs volunteers to help with the following Committee tasks:

Secretary: to attend Committee and General meetings, take minutes and support the Committee by helping with other tasks periodically.

Communications Officer (Social Media): to contribute to the NEA’s work in social media such as Facebook/Twitter in cooperation with the other Communications Officer who deals

with Press Releases/the NEA newsletter and general communications/queries, to attend Committee and General meetings.

Treasurer: to attend Committee meetings and General meetings, to set up and run a bank account for the Alliance, maintain accounts and update each Committee meeting of the Alliance on the state of our funds and future liabilities.

Policy and Research Volunteer: We need a volunteer who can do further research on the routes/impacts of prospective specific Expressway route options. There will be a consultation on this in the autumn but we would like a volunteer in place before that to commence this work, obtaining information from involved groups and website sources. To attend Committee and General meetings when possible.

For all posts: apply to Dr Hazel Dawe, Chair, No Expressway Alliance – hazeldawe5@gmail.com with relevant details. For an informal chat about what would be involved, ring Hazel on 079444 71083

Postal communications: 53 Bulan Road Oxford OX3 7HU – 07747 036192

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 31st July 2019 please send in your news. Thanks to all who contributed to this edition.

Website: www.noexpresswayalliance.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NoExpresswayAlliance/>

Twitter: @NoExpressway

CAMPAIGNING PETITIONS:

Online signatures at change.org at: 8150 on 1st July 2019

Hard copy signatures at 12th June 2019: 1238

Request a copy of the petition by email for printing and use in your area by emailing Steve Dawe at stevedawe@gn.apc.org And return filled in petitions to him at 53 Bulan Road, Oxford OX3 7HU

See also this petition exclusively on a Green Belt issue in the Oxford area:

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-green-belt-destruction-in-oxfordshire>

DATES:

- **7th July** 7th July Walk the Moor event. Starting from Horton-cum-Studley Millennium Hall at 10.15am, with a lunch-break at The Crown in Charlton from 12.30-2pm and a child friendly route in the afternoon. Refreshments will be served in Horton-cum-Studley from 4pm.

AND:

Join Brill's Anti-Expressway Walk, **7th July Meet** at the Windmill at 10.30am for a gentle 5 mile circular stroll to Rushbeds Wood and meadows.

The meadows will be full of flowers and buzzing with insects, while the woods are a fragment of the ancient royal hunting forest of Bernwode, home to 7 species of bats, rare butterflies and the Brill tramway. Both wood and meadows are potentially threatened by the proposed expressway.

10th July General Meeting, No Expressway Alliance, Kingsmere Community Centre, Whiteland way, BICESTER, Oxfordshire, OX26 1EG. Speaker Professor David Rogers on Transport, Climate Change and the Expressway.

- **27th July CHANGE OF DATE – SEE BELOW** No Expressway picnic on Brill Hill, 10.30am-1pm
- **31st August** No Expressway Rally on Brill Hill: 31st August. Musicians, stalls, speakers. Provisional time will be 11.30 to 3.30.

TRANSPORT MODELLING AND THE EXPRESSWAY

This part of the Corridor Assessment is worth a look. On the assumptions contained in this Appendix, a lot of the justification for the Expressway hangs: <http://assets.highwaysengland.co.uk/roads/road-projects/Oxford+to+Cambridge+expressway/Traffic+Modelling+and+Appraisal+-+Appendix+G.pdf>

OXFORD'S LOCAL PLAN FOUND UNSOUND ON HOUSING – WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER DISTRICTS IN OXFORDSHIRE

See report of Planning Inspector comments (and actual comments in more detail from the Inspector) at: <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/current-news/item/2762-oxford-lp-put-horse-before-cart>

SHOULD OXFORDSHIRE GROW?

Oxford Civic Society reports on its meeting in which Professor Danny Dorling and County Council leader, Ian Hudspeth, debated growth and the Expressway. It is fair to say that Mr Hudspeth found a single supporter in the large audience....<https://www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk/should-oxfordshire-grow-the-proposed-expressway/>

ANNELIESE DODDS MP changes position on Expressway

In a message to David Williams, an NEA supporter, Anneliese Dodds MP for Oxford East, makes this comment:

“The Expressway was initially linked to the delivery of additional homes (which I am sure you agree we desperately need given the housing crisis in Oxford). However, the latest Arc document does not include previous claims that this housing is contingent on the building of the Expressway. Therefore,

as indeed I have written in the Oxford Mail some weeks ago, I believe that there is no case for the Expressway plans continuing.”

Without getting into the utility of having mainly very expensive homes in the countryside far away from employment centres, this is new news and not something any of us had noted in the Oxford Mail...Anyway, this does represent considerable progress from the NEA delegation visit to see Anneliese Dodds in which she was adamant about the need for the Expressway.

Subsequently, Anneliese Dodds has confirmed her opposition to the Expressway at a meeting on Labour’s Green New Deal in Oxford, 29th June 2019.

POETS (Planning Oxfordshire’s Environment and Transport Sustainably)

Email: contact.poets@gmail.com

6 June 2019

To all Members of Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire’s 5 District Councils, and Oxfordshire MPs

Dear Councillor,

Planning Oxfordshire’s Environment and Transport Sustainably

Oxfordshire is facing major threats to its environment and character: unprecedented housing growth, and the building of a new “Expressway” which will bring more traffic into the county, adding to congestion on local roads and increasing greenhouse gases and pollution.

We are a group of practising and retired senior transport and planning professionals and academics who have spent most of our careers working for Oxfordshire local authorities, the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University. We are not affiliated to any political party.

We are calling for a re-think of the current approach, particularly in the light of the acknowledged climate emergency, and for our elected representatives to develop a plan which involves:

- **scrapping the Expressway**, bringing forward investment in an electrified East-West rail, better managing existing infrastructure (including roads such as the A34), and investing in effective cycling and bus networks. This would be cheaper as well as more sustainable
- **critically examining the housing numbers** proposed, and advocating a changed approach which would ensure a greater proportion of new housing was built to meet local need and was located where it could be best served by public rather than private transport
- **an open, genuinely consultative approach**, which takes proper account of environmental factors (including adopting the Committee on Climate Change’s carbon reduction target and doing more than paying lip service to the Government’s 25-year environment plan)

- **pressing for changes to national planning, transport and housing policy** which could make this easier to achieve
 - some of this could be done simply and quickly, some would be longer term.

As professionals, we have become increasingly alarmed, firstly at the scale of development proposed for Oxfordshire over the coming years and some of the measures to facilitate it, secondly at the fundamental conflicts with declared national and local policies particularly in the light of the acknowledged climate crisis, and thirdly at the failure to hold any meaningful public consultation about the future.

One example of the worrying direction that future policy is taking is the proposed Oxford to Cambridge “Expressway”. This is a road that appears to have neither a credible transport justification nor any significant public support; it would run counter to most national and local transport policies which purport to favour a move away from private road transport, and would be in direct conflict with the need urgently to reduce carbon emissions from transport. Moreover, it would be likely to facilitate development in areas which will be difficult if not impossible to serve by effective public transport or pedestrian or cycle routes, while adding yet more traffic onto the A34 south of Oxford (already one of the most congested and dangerous roads in the country).

The character of Oxfordshire would be fundamentally changed by more than doubling the number of dwellings and the proposals for accommodating the movement of people and goods that would result. The historic protection of Oxford’s setting is already at risk from proposed development in sensitive parts of the Green Belt around it, despite successive Secretaries of State (both Conservative and Labour) stressing its long-term importance. New housing is needed, but it needs to be the right kind of housing, in the right locations and available at the right price (for purchase or rent).

While we acknowledge the work that has been done on the Oxfordshire 2050 plan, it appears that the current agenda is being driven by central government and the (unelected) National Infrastructure Commission. From the outside, it seems that our financially hard-pressed councils may have been swayed by the promise of some money for infrastructure measures that might mitigate some of the worst impacts. However, the amount on offer to date is only a tiny fraction of the £10bn infrastructure shortfall already identified by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

There has been little in the way of meaningful public consultation or involvement; in particular there is a pressing need to involve young people who will be most affected by the climate crisis.

At the following links you will find a critical examination of the proposed housing and development proposals, and a proposal for a sustainable transport strategy that would obviate the need for an Expressway. We would be delighted to discuss these with you if you would like further information.

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/bd80e4a3b732ad58a424140ee/files/fd3a100b-41ba-421e-9f44-81afb70425d8/Balancing_Oxfordshire_s_Growth_in_a_Climate_Change_Emergency.final.030619.01.doc
https://gallery.mailchimp.com/bd80e4a3b732ad58a424140ee/files/380bec5c-a506-49ba-9763-b5fbc34281e3/Oxford_to_Cambridge_Corridor_Alternative_Strategy.final.June19.02.docx

We call upon you as our elected representatives to have the courage to step back and take a fresh approach.

Yours faithfully,

POETS
(Planning Oxfordshire’s Environment and Transport Sustainably)

POETS (Planning Oxfordshire’s Environment and Transport Sustainably) are:

Katie Barrett, formerly planning policy manager at Vale of White Horse District Council, local plans officer at South Oxfordshire District Council, transport policy manager at Oxfordshire County Council

Bob Bixby, formerly transport planning course director, Oxford Brookes University

Chris Cousins, formerly head of sustainable development at Oxfordshire County Council

Noel Newson, formerly chief assistant engineer at Oxford City Council, group manager for sustainable transport at Oxfordshire

County Council

Gill Oliver, formerly planning policy manager, South Oxfordshire District Council

Gordon Stokes, honorary visiting research associate at Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford

Ian Walker, formerly spatial planning manager at Oxfordshire County

The Oxford Cambridge Expressway – time to debate?

DAVID J. ROGERS

The Oxford Cambridge expressway proposal is a chameleon project, changing shades depending on the viewer. For some, a virtually motorway-standard road will reduce car journey times from Oxford to Cambridge. For others a new road through open countryside will unlock the potential for house-building on a massive scale. For others still, the expressway is the ‘missing link’ that connects the M1 to the A34/M4, offering a new route for freight traffic, and reducing the HGV loads on the presently over-crowded M25 and M1. For the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), the expressway and associated houses provide a ‘once in a generational opportunity to transform housing and transport’ and to boost employment in the hi-tech industries along the Ox-Cam Arc, and thus contribute to the future prosperity of UK plc.

The reactions to the expressway proposals are as varied as are the views of it. In 2016 the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) wrote to the National Infrastructure Commission that ‘The University would be disinclined to support a strategic expressway if it were to be delivered at the expense of investment in solving more urgent local transport priorities’*. Those urgent priorities included poor physical connections between the labour market and an increasingly geographically dispersed housing supply, chronic congestion on the highway and public transport networks and poor air quality in Oxford city where NOx and particulates from road transport exceeded safe levels. These factors were priorities because more than half of the University’s staff lived beyond the ring road. Instead of an expressway, the University favoured the East-West Rail (EWR) that will connect Oxford and Cambridge city centres more directly, avoiding the first/last mile problem of the daily commute. It added that ‘delivering both road and rail strategic connections appear unaffordable’.

Over the course of the year or so following the 2016 submission to the NIC, however, the University subtly but significantly changed its position on the expressway. It retained its over-riding enthusiasm for East-West Rail, and even imagined a string of parkway stations along it, associated with new developments from which University workers could walk or bicycle to their local station for an easy commute to the city centre each day.

In 2017 Highways England engaged in a consultation with a select group of Stakeholders over three alternative and quite broad corridors for the expressway, A, B and C, following an essentially Southern route, middle and Northern route respectively. Corridors B and C passed around Oxford City but excluded both the City itself and the RSPB reserve on Otmoor and its immediate environs.

Highways England asked two specific questions, for responses by April 2018:

- 1. What is your preferred Corridor and why?*

2. Are there any Corridors you do not support, and why?

The University's initial response to this consultation, in April 2018, essentially re-iterated its position of more than a year previously; lack of affordable housing, poor connections of the housing and labour supplies and congestion on the transport network. It confirmed that the rail corridor 'presents a sound strategic solution' and, in response to the direct questions about the expressway, replied that it had insufficient evidence to form a clear institutional preference for any option, suggesting, however, that, if built at all, the expressway should enhance the strategic value of the rail link, for example by including park&ride schemes, parkway stations and clear cycle routes 'that do not encourage increase commuting by car'.

Less than three months later, and therefore three months after the deadline for Corridor option responses, the University wrote again to Highways England in a letter titled 'Oxford-Cambridge Expressway: Summer 2018 Corridor Decision'. In it, the Vice-Chancellor announced: 'The University is in principle in favour of strategic connections between Oxford and Cambridge, such as an expressway'. It went on to say that 'On the basis of information provided in the consultation, the University would support the (expressway) corridor that best follows and connects with EWR, which implies the central corridor, option B'. The letter later formally re-iterated the earlier requests for expressway plans to include park & rides, parkway stations and traffic free cycle routes for the critical first/last mile commute, but there had in the interim been no formal commitment by Highways England to any of these essential components. Thus the University was supporting the idea of an expressway without any of the mechanisms to prevent it from increasing traffic congestion where it is already most pronounced.

It appears to the outsider that the University was wary not to miss the opportunity to benefit from this push for the Growth Corridor despite the fact that the plans would not directly address the University's own key problems; in fact they would probably make them worse. The University has been a member of Highways England's Strategic Employers Group since late 2017 and remains today one of a number of universities brought together under the Arc Leader's Group that also includes local authorities, England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and the four Local Enterprise Partnerships across the Arc from Oxford to Cambridge. A March 2019 document announcing the Arc leaders group, and arising from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), re-affirms the Government's ambition for 'up to one million high-quality new homes (across the Arc) by 2050'. The University is therefore effectively signing up to this part of the plan as well.

One wonders how it is possible that statements made in the 2016 letter to the National

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Infrastructure Commission concluding that:

a) 'East-West Rail is clearly the preferred inter-city solution offering rapid, city door-to-door connections',

b) 'Expressway investment as the sole inter-city solution would... likely encourage more longer distance car-borne trips causing more gridlock... air quality problems... and lock the area into a carbon intense transport system',

should, by mid-2018, become endorsement by the University of both rail and road links between the two cities that, it had concluded in 2016, were 'unaffordable'.

The completion of East-West Rail by 2030 seems far more certain than even the start of the expressway by that date. The qualification of support for the expressway with a request for station parkway or park&ride schemes (for that first/last mile commute) implies that car drivers will come from across the Arc to out-of-town stations from which they will complete their journey by other forms of transport. If we have East-West Rail there will be no need for such out-of-town decanting points, and journeys can be completed much more quickly, entirely by rail.

The expressway plans are driven by Highways England that can think only in terms of car-based solutions to any commuting problem. The car lobby's response to being told that there will be a half-hourly train service between Oxford and Cambridge when EWR is completed was that business-people may want to leave on the quarter hour, and thus need an expressway for their journey. Even if completed, the expressway journey to Cambridge will be at least half an hour longer than the train journey, and it will not deliver travellers to the city centre (Highways England's journey times are from ring-road to ring-road, not city centre to city centre).

The expressway is a twentieth century solution to a twenty first century problem. Albert Einstein said "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them", but that is precisely what Highways England's South East Regional Traffic Model (SERTM) does. To calculate how many houses can be accommodated near each new expressway junction, the traffic model calculates (on the basis of information in a large database of past traffic flows along strategic routes) how many cars might arrive at each junction during peak travel times; the car numbers in the model are based on existing cars plus additional amounts for all presently planned growth to about the mid 2030s. The difference between the maximum junction capacity (determined by the road engineers who design junctions) and the modelled traffic flow is called the 'spare capacity'. This spare capacity of the new junction for extra cars is in turn used to calculate how many new houses around the junction would 'produce' those cars. In turn each house is assumed to be home to 1.27 workers or 2.33 people (both average national statistics). So the SERTM determines cars which in turn determine homes which in turn determine workers. The result is an estimate of the numbers of additional houses and workers that the presence of the expressway could 'unlock' locally. Fairly obviously, an expressway junction in open countryside, where there are very few existing cars, houses or workers, has a great deal of 'spare capacity' for more. Such junctions have the potential to develop very large populations indeed. For example, an expressway junction 'East of Oakley' (a small village just over the Oxfordshire border in a very rural and beautiful part of Buckinghamshire) has spare capacity for the cars of 82,000 workers, implying a total population of 150,000 people – a brand new community about the size of Oxford City (154,000 souls in 2017) to be completed by 2050 (the date for most expressway targets). Who needs old Oxford City when you can have a brand new one, less than 15 kms away, within the next 30 years?

All along the Ox-Cam Arc the story is the same; the more open the countryside, the greater the potential to be unlocked for new cars, houses, people and jobs (yes, there's also a jobs model). Some of the NIC's aspirational growth target of one million new homes by 2050 are already in Local Plans, but the majority are not. Oxfordshire's share of the one million is about 300,000 new homes, approximately 100,000 in Local Plans and the remainder expressway-related. The total current housing stock of the county is 280,000. In other words, in the space of 30 years, the entire county will double in houses, cars, people, congestion, pollution and, yes, the difficulty of getting to work on over-crowded car-based infrastructure.

Both Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council in recent meetings have acknowledged a climate emergency and voted for zero carbon targets within a decade or so. Consistent with that,

the City Council also voted to oppose the expressway; the County Council did not do so but instead asked for more consultation before it could finally decide.

And indeed, whilst information is not in short supply (the Highways England Corridor Assessment Report, plus Annexes, that finally opted for Corridor B, comes in at over 1,000 pages), public consultation certainly is. The minutes of a meeting of Highways England with a small, select group of Stakeholders in March 2018 included the following:

“Engagement will continue until DCO application. Engagement with members of the public on corridors is challenged by the scale of the Project area. There are c.3.3 million people living in the arc. Consultation on corridors would require years of additional work at substantial cost to taxpayers. It would also leave a level of uncertainty across the region that was undesirable.

The Project Team are therefore engaging with Stakeholder Reference groups who themselves represent various public interests (environment, road users etc).”

In other words we, the public, will not be consulted yet because there are far too many of us!

The public’s interests in Highways England’s closed meetings are represented *inter alia* by commercial companies, freight, port and bus companies, potential investors (including British/America Tobacco), various wildlife and environmental NGOs, several Universities (including Oxford) and District and County Councils along the expressway route. There has been virtually no feed-back on any of the major decisions already taken for this vast project, and Highways England may well be in breach of national and international laws on Strategic Environmental Assessment

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and Habitats Regulations Assessment (both designed to protect habitats from excessive development). This amounts to a worrying democratic deficit in one of the largest infrastructure schemes proposed in this region for at least the last 50 years. And the University opportunistically joins in without itself consulting Congregation, or challenging any of the assumptions on which the proposal is based, or considering any of the environmental consequences. No estimates have yet been made of the carbon emissions that would arise from building the expressway, let alone of all the emissions from the additional traffic the expressway would encourage. A June 2019 document from POETS (Planning Oxfordshire’s Environment and Transport Sustainability) points out that ever since a 1994 Report by the UK advisory committee SACTRA, the evidence suggests that increasing road capacity often results in increases in traffic volumes.

With Oxford Colleges lining up to develop the Green Belt for Local Plan houses (e.g. Christ Church’s 1100 home plan on land North of Bayswater Brook, within sight of one of only a few remaining rural view cones into Oxford, and bordering a unique Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the corporate University supporting plans to double the County’s houses, people and cars by 2050, future generations will ask their own two questions of the University:

1) *How did the University authorities arrive at the decision to support the expressway proposals?*

and

2) *Why didn’t the rest of the University challenge this decision?*

For, as Francis Bacon wrote more than 400 years’ ago:

‘Silence is the virtue of fools’

* Documents used to prepare this article were released as a result of a formal FOI request from the No Expressway Alliance (NEA).

The author is a member of the No Expressway Group (NEG), a nonpolitical community group based in Horton-cum-Studley, Oxford. It was founded in 2018 to campaign to raise awareness of the OxfordCambridge Expressway plans. Web: <https://www.noexpressway.org/>
Email: noexpresswaygroup@gmail.com

Council

Elizabeth Wilson, principal lecturer in environmental planning, Oxford Brookes University

Roger Williams, formerly head of transport at Oxfordshire County Council

David Young, formerly director of environmental services at Oxfordshire County Council

BARONESS DEECH ASKS QUESTIONS ON THE EXPRESSWAY IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Baroness Deech of Cumnor has now put the written questions to the government. I believe answers will be posted at <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-questions-answers/>

We put forward 5 and she has secured 3 of them (and she will seek to ask more before the summer break)

The questions are as follows:-

Baroness Deech to ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the combined impact of (1) the planned Oxford to Cambridge expressway, and (2) their ambition to build up to one million homes along the Oxford–Cambridge Arc, on the UK's 2050 target to reduce carbon emissions by at least 80 per cent of 1990 levels; and whether this assessment is based on (a) electric, (b) petrol, or (c) diesel vehicles using the route. HL16088

Baroness Deech to ask Her Majesty's Government whether a cost-benefit analysis has been carried out for the planned Oxford to Cambridge expressway; and if so, what were the results of that analysis.

HL16089 Baroness Deech to ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the planned Oxford to Cambridge expressway on air quality affecting schools close to the proposed route options. HL16090

We are also exploring how to get some clever air quality modelling for key points along the proposed routes (when we know them) but will let you know when we have something more tangible.

Hazel Dawe

Helen Marshall: FUTURE OF THE ARC?

See the presentation from Bev Hindle (Bev is a long-standing Oxon County Council Director but has recently become Director of the Oxfordshire Growth Board *and* Director of the OxCam Arc Chief Exec and Leaders Groups:

<http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/documents/b7485/Presentations%20given%20at%20Oxfordshire%20Growth%20Board%204%20June%20Tuesday%2004-Jun-2019%2014.00%20Oxfordshire%20Grow.pdf?T=9>

NB In particular, slide on page 8 – which sets out the current vision/ambition from the Arc.

This talks about:

- This is our emerging shared ambition to 2050, but now we want to hear from others – from businesses, from environmental and heritage groups, from the public. So we will launch a road show over Summer 2019 to get their views.
- And this will be a digital road show too, aiming to embed open digital policy making principles so everyone gets their say.
- We will aim to publish a revised ambition in Autumn 2019

Page 10 then indicates that there will be a further Govt commitment to the scheme in the Autumn statement (which is perhaps unintentionally revealing about how much notice will be paid to the consultation!)

SPEECH TO LABOUR GREEN NEW DEAL EVENT IN OXFORD – 29TH June – STEVE DAWE

NEA Presentation – Labour Green New Deal event, 29 6 2019

What is the Cambridge-Oxford Expressway?

Claims of 1 million homes along this Arc by 2050: but we do not have the construction workers & the environmental impacts would make addressing the Climate Emergency impossible: very briefly: we need to use the existing built environment and brownfield sites to build homes. Campaign for the

protection of Rural England research suggests a minimum of 1 million homes could be built in England on brownfield sites.

Bear in mind another 1 m home are planned by 2050 around the end of the Thames Estuary, in Essex and Kent.

Why is the Cambridge-Oxford Expressway completely unacceptable on any route?

- **Waste of money:** Highways England estimates the cost of the road route alone at £4.1 bn. Completing the East West rail route will cost about £1bn. However, the Expressway scheme is for CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT, meaning a considerable amount of additional spending would be needed on roads to access new warehousing/housing/other facilities built alongside the Expressway.
- **Breach of Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan:** The councils in Oxfordshire have signed up to a Local Transport Plan which includes seeking to reduce car commuting into Oxford – an Expressway would increase car commuting.
- **Environmental damage:** The Berks-Bucks-Oxon Wildlife Trusts are undertaking a Judicial Review of the Expressway due to its environmental effects.
- **Climate Emergency:** As the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report very strongly emphasises, progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and cutting global temperatures has yet to be achieved.
- **Air pollution:** 64,000 deaths from air pollution each year in the UK is a public health disaster. Many thousands more people are adversely affected by poor air quality. Any initiative which increases car journeys makes this worse and should not be done.
- **Undemocratic process:** No consultation has taken place on the principle of having an Expressway. This is wholly undemocratic
- **Illegal process:** 11 members of the European Parliament's Transport Committee have written to the European Transport Commissioner arguing that the Expressway is illegal in terms of EU law.
- **No economic case:** Proponents of the Expressway offer economic growth platitudes about how the Cambridge-Oxford corridor will be beneficial for economic growth. However, it is more likely that the Expressway will permit house building in locations suited to commuting mainly towards London as our major employment centre, rather than any other effect. **Feeding people:** The UK is importing huge quantities of food which could be produced here in the UK. You cannot produce food from concrete and tarmac – as provided by the Expressway corridor.
- **Forests for the future:** The UK imports most of the wood and wood products we use in the UK. Ripping these out for the Expressway makes little sense economically and conflicts with UK policies on biodiversity as well.

What is to be done?

SUPPORT CAMPAIGNING PETITIONS:

Online signatures at change.org at <https://www.change.org/p/the-secretary-of-state-for-transport-chris-grayling-mp-cancel-the-oxford-to-cambridge-expressway>

OPPOSE THE EXPRESSWAY ON ALL ROUTES – IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

PREPARE FOR CONSULTATIONS ON THE EXPRESSWAY:

TWO CONSULTATIONS ON THE EXPRESSWAY ROUTE – NOT ONE

EXPRESSWAY STORIES

The No Expressway Group (NEG) have made a short film “**EXPRESSWAY STORIES: OTMOOR**” (5 mins). It’s about local artist Nick Myneer who has lived on Otmoor since he was a child. In the film Nick talks about the landscape’s influence on his work, the importance of the countryside on our and the planets wellbeing and what would be lost if the expressway goes ahead.

Here’s the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=sZRe82KR6WI>

The No Expressway Campaign is growing. Through painstaking research the development plans which the Government and Highways England have tried to keep hidden, such as the “aspirational growth estimates of **80,000 jobs and workers East of Oakley**” and “**50,000 new jobs and workers East of Oxford**” (somewhere between Wheatley and Abingdon), are coming to light. The general public are given little opportunity to have their say on this huge urban sprawl which will blight the countryside in Oxon and Bucks. If you have a story we can make a film about for our “**EXPRESSWAY STORIES**” documentary series please get in touch and help spread the word.

Jonathan Barker

<https://www.noexpressway.org/>

EXTINCTION REBELLION OXFORD – DIRECT ACTION FOR THE FUTURE?

Periodically, supporters of Extinction Rebellion ask if they can do more on the Expressway. This has meant putting them on to our email lists, and encouraging support for NEA events. However, if the Expressway does not fall apart on cost or environment grounds, non violent direct action may be necessary to resist road building. It is good to know that this Alliance has such supporters, if conditions justify such action.
